

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, June 1, 1901, with transcript, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. GRAND HOTEL, Beau-Rivage, Geneve. 1, June 1901.

My dear little boy — Why don't you answer my cables, when I spend all that money on e them you should surely feel that I want an answer to them. I cabled you “Farcia, Berlin impossible shall I order your books.” “You reply Elsie perfectly well don't change your plans except come to Atlantic City instead of Baddeck.” Not a word in reply to the specific question, “shall I order your books.” I am glad to know that Elsie is well, I wouldn't have cabled Farcia if I hadn't felt anxious to know how she was. Still I did not feel really troubled. She and you all have had a fright and warning and I cannot but feel that she is pretty safe for the present. The danger will come by and by, and then I shall want to be with her. The reason why Berlin is impossible is not on account of Elsie, but of Mamma and also of you. I don't want to stay away from you any longer than I can help. I found that it would not do for me to take Mamma to Berlin and then drop her, but to go to Berlin and then take her somewhere else would have meant further delay in my return, to which she would not have consented. No one realizes how both she and Gipseey dread being left to their own resources. If Grace could come down alone it would be easy enough for me to leave, but Mamma does not want all Grace's chil r d ren in the same house with her, she is too tired for that. Beside Grace can't take her around as I can with Charles back of me and that makes a lot of difference. I am sure that you would say that I ought to stay by Mamma until I can get 2 her settled. This we have come to this most unattractive town to do and I wish myself anywhere else, even to Atlantic City, which except that you are all there seems to me very nearly the most undesirable place I know of. Of course we can't stay here and I have a good mind to persuade Mamma to return to Lucerne, but we are going to explore the lake, Laussane, Vevey etc. At Montreux are some friends of a friend

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we made in Sicily, and perhaps through them we may find a place for Mamma. I have also letters of introduction given me by Herr Schröter, which I will present. Meanwhile Mr. Pernod has taken our affairs under his charge and has written to some one he knows, a letter twelve pages long to see if she will give Gipseying lessons. If she will do this and Gip likes her half our difficulties will be solved, more than half, because she is to be asked to travel with them. But she is in Holland now, and it is considerable of a risk having her come across Europe, and then not to like her. Mr. Pernod answers for her in his usual enthusiastic way and simply carried Mamma and Gipseying along with him. But I mean to make inquiries here so as not to be entirely dependent upon him. As for him personally I found him more fascinating than ever, and actually felt like weeping a little weep when saying goodbye. But then it was hot and I was oh so tired. He came up from his present home an hour by rail from Lucerne to dine with us, and stayed all night and next morning travelled with us as far as Berne and went all over the city with us finally seeing us off on the train. I wish he had told us not to come here, for we should certainly have followed his advice, and then we would have been saved a very long hot journey to a stupid place where a fete is going on and all business at a standstill.

Gip said "If only he weren't so fat and was an American!" Mamma was delighted with him although she clings to the memory of her German architect in Sicily who was so free and frank and strong and true and walked ten or fifteen miles with the light joyous step of a soldier swinging freshly along to the sound of gay music. Poor Mr. Pernod might do his ten or fifteen miles but would hardly look as fresh afterward I fear, but he's a dear all the same and there was something so delightfully naive and boyish in the way he spread out both hands with all five fingers extended to show how rough and hard and ugly they had grown after months of hard work in the field behind the plough and digging. For he has just completed his theoretical course in the Agricultural College and is now working out his two or three years of practical work in farming. He begins in the very beginning like a common farm laborer, and is so enthusiastic about it all. Agriculture he says is the study of "Life" the most interesting in the world and the most scientific. The next moment he was giving

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Gertrude a lecture on the different methods of singing, and yesterday he was imitating all the different noises of animals and mimicking the two girls themselves. I was so sorry to let him go, and I think he is really fond of us he seemed so glad to see me and had to shake hands with me across the table more than once to say how nice it was to see me again. The last I heard he was coming to Geneva to see Gip and bring her a little Swiss pig! Mr. Schröter was perfectly dear too, there is no other word for it. He has a very nice wife and two handsome children, at least he has three, but I only saw two. He showed me some wonderful things he and Mr. Pernod⁴ collected and said his book on the collection would come out next year. Mr. Pernod was very much interested in my little photograph of Elsie and Bert at the church door, and liked Bert very much, he said he looked as if he meant to protect Elsie against everything, and I think there is something very striking in his expression and the way he holds Elsie on his arm. Sadie Sears, Mrs. Montgomery Sears, is here, I have not seen her I think since Daisy was born, she came up and spoke to us just as she used to, but she is not as pretty. But she is very young looking.

Since you want us to go to Atlantic City I have got to get some more dresses, I hoped by going to Baddeck to escape this expense, but I really am not fit to be seen except in travelling clothes. Daisy too is hard up, and wants a dress for the Prom at Amherst.

I have written you and Elsie several letters addressed just Atlantic City, did you get them? I have only just got Elsie's letter with her address.

I love you, and want to be with you, I think you are lovely.

Lovingly yours, I see I did not explain that the special purpose of my cable was to find out if you still wanted me to order your flying machine books from Berlin? I have a copy of the catalogue and have marked a lot I thought were what you wanted, but I don't see why you can't do this much better yourself and so do not like to take the responsibility of ordering

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them without specific instructions from you. As you don't give them I shall not order the books.